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OUR WANT OF CLERGY:

ITS CAUSES, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS CURE.

A Sermon

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

ON THE

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 1, 1863.

BY THE

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WITH AN APPENDIX.

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“ UT OPERARIOS FIDELES IN MESSEM TUAM MITTERE DIGNERIS,
TE ROGAMUS AUDI NOS.”

Simplex ac Pia Deliberatio Hermanni Archiepisc. Colon. 1545.

Our Want of Clergy: &c.

ST. LUKE x. 2.

“THE HARVEST TRULY IS GREAT, BUT THE LABOURERS
ARE FEW.”

FEW amongst us will not have cast at least a passing thought on the solemn scene scarce yet over in our several cathedrals. There are friends such as one makes in this place but never elsewhere, companions of every day, partners in study and amusement, almost twin brethren of the very thoughts, who have within this very hour recorded at God's altar the closest of pledges by which a man can bind himself. On such a day, in such a place, before so many who have these vows on them, so many more of whom this self-dedication is expected,—let me also add, at a crisis like this in the annals of our Church,—there are grave and urgent reflections which thrust themselves on those whose work in life is bound up with the Church's work and the Church's progress.

How shall we explain the fact—which is no new one to you—that the Church's service draws year by year fewer recruits from amongst you? It is unhappily true that the ministry is altogether less sought after than was the case twenty years ago; but even of the dwindled band of recruits which now an Ember week enrolls, we owe a smaller proportion to our ancient Universities, a much smaller proportion to this University^a. In old times our two English Universities were the regular and

^a See Appendix A.

recognised clerical training-schools, and five-sixths of our clergy had graduated in them ; now a full third are strangers both to Oxford and Cambridge.

Nor is this all : the men you do send us distribute themselves very unevenly amongst our dioceses. It is no uncommon thing for a bishop's ordination-list to shew not one graduate from the first name to the last. In many populous districts, in many large towns, church after church is served by Literates alone. In many ruridecanal chapters, out of twenty or thirty members there will be found scarce one or two to represent this or the sister University. It is at the very centres of influence and industry, which absorb an ever-increasing proportion of the intelligence, the energy, the political power of the country, that the Church is most feebly represented. The localities which teem most with a population naturally shrewd and now well-educated, are mainly, sometimes almost entirely, in spiritual charge of those who have received at most a very imperfect training ; who, so far from guiding the restless and inquisitive spirits with which they have to deal, are often themselves inferior in all advantages of education and information to those for whom their lips should keep knowledge.

And yet even of this inferior class of men,—inferior, let me say, simply as to literary and intellectual qualifications, not inferior assuredly in diligence, for they work during their short course of preparation for Holy Orders as few men do at the University,—not inferior in piety and devotedness, for they are for the most part men who have forsaken other and usually more gainful employments for this sacred one,—but of these men, such as they are, the supply is very short. Incumbents in the mining and manufacturing districts have to wait year

after year for the help they urgently need: they are ready with the title; ready, through the help of the Societies, with what is called a full stipend, but they wait in vain. The strength and time of the clergyman are often in such parishes scarce enough for the public and occasional offices of the Church; for the management of several parish institutions, which must be done by him or left undone, for visiting here and there a sick person when the case is extreme, there is, there can be, but the barest semblance of pastoral oversight, and that conducted through lay agency. In very deed, vast masses of people are simply, by the hard necessity of the case, cut adrift from the Church's care altogether, and left to Dissent, or rather—for it is not amongst such that Dissent does much—to godlessness and unbelief. It needs to see these things to realize them; it needs not to stay to prove their existence; that is clear from the bare fact that our population doubles every fifty years, whilst our parochial machinery is scarce enlarged at all^b.

Neither is this the worst; it is only during the last few years that our ministerial supply has been diminished. Previously, indeed, there was an increasing demand for clergy, with little signs of an increased supply. But now, as the men of the older generation are being removed in the course of nature, they are not replaced by an equal number^c. We are approaching a date when from our scantier force we must, unless speedily and largely recruited, abandon ground now occupied, though not occupied in strength; when helpers in heavy parishes will not only be scarce, as they now are, but not procurable on any terms; when we shall not merely neglect the vast multitudes now aggregated in swelling tumours round the heart and

^b See Appendix B.

^c See Appendix C.

the vitals of the nation, but we shall cease, perforce, to afford even the perfunctory baptism, burial, or marriage to their countless thousands. The severed branch retains for a time its verdure and beauty, for it draws on the resources within itself: even so our ministry holds its own yet for a while; but it cannot grow, it must even fade and fail if, as is now the case, its natural wear and waste be not given back to it from without.

This state of things has brought about a new phenomenon in our ecclesiastical system. For a new phenomenon it is that there should be institutions, and many of them, which prepare men exclusively for Ordination, which qualify them without the aid of the University, which are recognised by our prelates as the source whence they must draw a third of their clergy (in some dioceses more than half their clergy already), whence soon in those same dioceses nearly all will be drawn. I speak not now of colleges which supply a professional training *supplementary* to the Universities, but of those which receive non-graduates and present them to the bishops after a two years' course, not seldom cut short in individual instances by the bishops themselves to a half or even a quarter of that time. Such institutions have probably but slight regard amongst you. But have they not grown up from sheer necessity? May we not with all respect say that the responsibility of their origin rolls back in no small measure on yourselves? Is it not better that the men who do seek the ministry, be they schoolmasters, or merchants' clerks, or apprentices, should be ordained after a period of special preparation in a college arranged for the purpose, after some little—though far too little—of contact and collision with other minds, under tutors of aptitude for this special work, rather than that they should be taken for the imposition

of hands straight from the desk and the counter? The founders of such colleges assuredly regard them only as a *second best* means to an end which must be accomplished somehow; and could not, so far as they see, be accomplished otherwise. Gladly, I think, would those who work such institutions see their pupils depart from them to crowd the colleges and schools of Oxford and Cambridge. It is granted on all hands that not only the highest training of the minister is through graduation here, but that that is the *only* proper and adequate training—that it ought in a normal state of things to be indispensable as a condition of Ordination. But no one who will calmly and candidly consider the state and prospects of the Church's work will assert that our rulers ought to enforce any such preliminary, or even can do so. A bishop who should refuse all but graduates, would in the north have half the most laborious posts of his diocese void. A bishop who should do so in more favoured localities, could only secure what he wanted for his own sphere at the expense of the Church elsewhere. Again and again has the attempt to raise the standard of qualification for Ordination been frustrated by the necessity of having men, and the impossibility of securing good men. A heavy burden surely it is which is laid on those who are adjured "to lay hands suddenly on no man," but find themselves in a cruel strait, and are constrained to lay hands continually on those whose attainments are woefully short of the mark, but must be sent forth in the Church's name because none other can be found to go.

Is there any hope that changes in your arrangements would attract a larger number of students to these time-honoured seats of learning? A two years' course in Arts, followed by a third year of special professional

study, has often been suggested. But it seems doubtful wisdom to throw away a good you have, for another you only hope for. It is little likely that any such change would bring into your hands more of our future clergy; whilst it would seriously impair the value, and mar the completeness of the general education which now you so effectively bestow. Let not our Universities degrade their ancient standard towards the popular level. Let them not waste in loading the memory the precious months now given to discipline of the mind. Never surely was it more essential that a system of mental cultivation of the highest order should be upheld in its integrity, and carried out amongst our upper ranks to its utmost finish. Such an education must always be costly. The number who can afford it and who will prize it must always be limited. That number, amidst great changes both within the Universities and without, amidst the introduction and multiplication of class-lists and prizes, amidst the throwing open of ancient foundations and the removal of doctrinal tests, has remained obstinately immoveable, and assuredly will do so. It has not increased; it is cause for thankfulness that it has not decreased.

Without mutilation of our noble University system, can we attract more of those who propose to seek Ordination to avail themselves of its full benefits? Something, no doubt, might in this way be done. There are associations in many places for aiding candidates for the ministry to graduate^d. These schemes might most advantageously be taken up, extended, stimulated, perhaps met half way by assistance from the University itself. Such assistance indeed the Church may justly claim. Her loss through University reforms has been in many

^d See Appendix D.

ways heavy—not least when her Orders, once the condition of so many offices and positions in the University, are now for those purposes so generally dispensed with.

But such plans could do but little; they might somewhat palliate the evils before us, they could not cure them. The Church requires, and that quickly, men in greatly increased numbers^e; three times, four times the scanty reinforcements she now draws. Can we hope to see the scale of clerical remuneration raised? The Church is a poorly paid profession; hence, in part at least, the reason why it is being less sought after; hence the reason why our ablest men decline it. There are, indeed, many more openings in life than there used to be, and the relative position of Holy Orders, in a worldly point of view, has fallen. The income of a clergyman remains much what it was early in the century, nay, is on an average lowered, for year by year new and slenderly endowed churches are added to reduce the average. But the country at large is richer than before, and our habits are more expensive. Rents, and profits, and stipends are enhanced on every side; advantages of social position entail much larger outgoings than heretofore. The pace of life is quickened, and money more needful for those who would hold their own in it. Trade turns over larger sums, involves mightier interests, presents quicker returns to industry and enterprise, is held in much higher estimation. Against this feverish bustle and competition, amidst the successes of this world and the allurements of an ever-growing luxury, the quieter life and the modest prospects of the ministry shew dull and pale. The tide of youthful genius and energy sets away from the Church

^e See Appendix E.

towards Australia and India, towards the mart, and the court, and the bar. Unless we bestir ourselves, our pulpits will be left to weakness, incapacity, and fanaticism.

There are those in this place whose words are never in vain ; whose names guarantee and recommend any movement they take up ; who have easy access to the centres of influence ; who have tender hearts to feel the evils of clerical poverty, wise heads to forecast its inevitable results ; we may surely add, who have likewise the zeal and will to devise and to apply the remedies.

Schemes for a general re-distribution of Church property are often talked of, but are plainly both revolutionary and hopeless. But much might be done, in full conformity with the spirit of our present arrangements, to re-adjust our present resources^f. The funds so procured would prove fruitful indeed if used as means for eliciting and stimulating voluntary effort. Our people have their idea of what a clergyman, his house, his family, ought to be. It is not to be believed for a moment that the means to realize such an ideal would be withholden if the need were plainly and authoritatively set forth, and due security given for the right use of them. Let our laity be plainly told that if a clergyman may not live according to his means,—if, whilst he has the pay of an operative, he must not wear serge, nor eke out his narrow income by manual labour, nor tenant a cottage,—then the only alternative is that they must provide for him after the measure they expect of him. It is not low pay only that our best clergy complain of ; many a labourer's cottage is lighted up with contentment and peace of mind ; the hardship and the cruelty lie in combining slender incomes with the position of a parish priest, in plunging a sensitive man into the

^f See Appendix F.

bitterness of genteel poverty. True, indeed, the ministry must not be sought from mercenary motives; but it is true also that "they that preach the Gospel ought to live of the Gospel." Let it be observed, too, that we cannot secure disinterested pastors by withholding the fair remuneration of their labour. There are those to whom the smallest living is a bait, but they will not be the best even of those with whom secondary motives prevail. Small livings, where they are a temptation at all, can be so only to the very needy, and to those who hope for nothing better in other walks of life. The effect of inadequate stipends is to draw to the ministry the less able of the poorest classes of the community, and no others.

There have grown up around us many small theological seminaries which qualify for Holy Orders without the aid of the Universities—which yearly increase in number—which gain even a firmer hold upon our ecclesiastical system, supplying already from a fourth to a third part of our ministers. Is it well that such institutions should be multiplied, and should absorb, as they threaten to do, the largest share in educating our clergy? Consider the natural and necessary characteristics of them. Diocesan colleges must be small. In each diocese there are scarcely, on the average, twenty men annually admitted to Holy Orders, and of these certainly not one quarter are likely as a rule to owe their introduction to the Church to the local college⁶. Theological colleges unquestionably ought to be under the conduct of an able Principal of clear and decided views. But such a man dealing with the class of minds which come under him cannot but turn out continued reproductions of his own opinions and peculiarities.

⁶ See Appendix G.

Neither can such a college either contain or support a staff of professors who might give in the general result breadth and variety of teaching. Must not our able prelates also—ought they not—does not the diocesan plan contemplate that they should—mould the working of the diocesan college? Shall we not have each college with its own manuals, ritual, course of doctrinal instruction modelled after some marked type? Is there no danger lest particular districts become the camps of particular parties, and the country have to be mapped out by its theological colours? An education, too, which is professional merely is ever undesirable. Yet a lawyer or a physician who has been trained exclusively amongst persons and things of his profession, need not perhaps be inferior in his art because he has learned nothing else. Far different with the parish priest. Theology is rightly placed as the keystone of the arch which is built up of the liberal arts. Studied from the first and alone, it above all sciences narrows the mind and hardens the heart; and, like some fallen angel, at once corrupts and is corrupted. If the only real education a young man receives is a theological one, he will hardly escape strongly marked party sympathies, exclusively professional habits of thought and feeling,—all, in short, which constitutes a priestly caste. Yet it is through contact—close and frequent—with the heart and mind of his people, through a sympathetic and generous tone of thought and feeling, that success in the sacred calling can alone be gained. Nor is this all. The appliances of a thorough theological education,—the chapel, the library, the lecture-room,—are neither few nor cheap. Can they be provided effectively for a large number of colleges up and down the country? How important is the environment of a young man during his college days!

Would it be well for our clergy to be trained where all about them is little, and mean, and squalid?

Such points can only be glanced at. Their significance and gravity will with such an audience find ready appreciation. Let it be observed that the issue before us is not now whether the Universities are not the best schools for our clergy; that is a point on which there is, or ought to be, but one opinion. The question, surely a most momentous question, is quite another. We cannot obtain clergy enough from the Universities; the supply, inadequate before, is not increasing; nor can it from this source be greatly increased. As a makeshift, our dioceses are being rapidly overspread by institutions exclusively professional, and above all exclusively theological, which impart by a hasty process a more or less efficient preparation for Holy Orders. Shall we stand by and see the education already of near a third—soon we shall have to say the majority—of our clergy passing out of the hands and from under the control of the Universities? Surely it is not well for the Church, nor for the country, nor for the Universities themselves, that this should be so, unless indeed no better system could be devised.

That indeed would be no improvement which should withdraw young men, or any of them, from the full academic course here offered. But without risk of this, something, even much, might be done by concerted action starting from our Universities, to forestal the mischiefs and make good the shortcomings of the present state of clerical education, and above all to secure an increased supply of clergy. Steps might be taken to bring about an amalgamation and reconstruction of the many theological colleges under the supervision of the Universities. Grouped round four or five centres, which

should, excepting the Universities, be the only recognised access to Holy Orders, our now scattered resources for theological instruction would go far to supply all that could possibly be wanted. The larger institutions might be rendered complete in all their parts. They could command and retain a tolerably numerous and efficient body of tutors, who should give themselves solely to the work. They would be rendered at least permanent from the first^h through existing endowments, and would gather rapidly round them from the piety of Churchmen new means of stability and increased usefulness. Their intellectual atmosphere would be freer, their impress broader, their standard higher. The temptations of poverty and the evils of competition amongst a number of little theological schools, each struggling to hold its ground, would be avoided. Affiliated to the Universities, they would have a standing before the Church and the country which otherwise they could not have. Details might be adjusted in many ways. The certificate of the theological colleges might bear the venerable imprimatur of the University; the examinations might be held within the precincts of the University; the University ought also to appoint the examiners, and have through its Professors a share in the management. The closer and nearer the tie between the University and the schools for our clergy the better. Lastly, it can hardly be doubted that through such an improved system of clerical education much might be done to remedy the grievous want of more clergy. The Church assuredly has a stronger and a deeper hold on the middle and lower classes than ever. There are many, many e.g. in the families of the less wealthy clergy, who would gladly seek Orders had they

^h See Appendix II

reasonable facilities for doing so. But the Universities are too expensive. To pass through a theological college indeed is easy and cheap, but the footing thus gained in the Church is inferior, the social consideration and influence less, the professional prospects, never in the Church brilliant, are to such discouraging indeedⁱ.

Through the means suggested I venture to think the Church would obtain the much-needed recruits for the ranks of the ministry, and those recruits, too, better trained and apter for her work than many she now enrols. But it is to our Universities that she should still, and always, look for the men to fill the more influential and responsible posts. It is only by a due supply of highly educated pastors that she can hope to hold her own amidst the growing and restless intellectualism of the times. It is only through such that she can retain or regain the many who now in the waywardness and self-sufficiency of half-learning, challenge on any pretext her faith or deny her authority. We must hope, therefore, that the causes which have of late robbed the Church of her wonted help from this place are but temporary. May I with all deference submit that the inadequacy,—the increased inadequacy,—of theological lectures in the colleges is amongst those causes^k? No doubt there are now, more than ever before, the ample advantages of professorial lectures in the various branches of divinity, but there is no obligation on your pupils to avail themselves of them. No doubt the curriculum of secular study, enlarged of late years, makes larger demands on the energy of both student and tutor. No doubt there is a reaction and lassitude after the inordinate and unseasonable appetite for theology which the younger part

ⁱ See Appendix I.

^k See Appendix J.

of the University manifested twenty years ago. But is it well and right that the studies subsidiary to Holy Orders should meet with anything approaching to slight acknowledgment, not to say tacit discountenance, from those immediately set over our students? Our young men are sent here whilst yet their vocation in life is undetermined. Is it wonderful, when the whole tide of their understanding and energy is turned towards secular study, when there is scarcely anything—for so sometimes it is—in the whole programme of the Term to recall the ancient Church tone and the theological associations of the University, except indeed the daily service at chapel,—is it wonderful with such changes in the character of the teaching and the whole spirit and genius of the place, that there should be a change also in the practical result upon the taught? Modern domestic life, too, affords but little of that solid homely indoctrination in the faith and in the Scriptures which was usual in middle class families of the last generation. Our public reads much; it takes a praiseworthy interest in religious questions; but in divinity it is wonderfully illiterate.

Hence the excitement and alarm about criticism on the sacred Scriptures. The difficulties raised may be more or less substantial. It is no part of my purpose to deny their existence or to discuss their importance. I am not prepared to assert that they have always received candid and satisfactory treatment from our apologists. But it is precisely the shallowest and most captious of them which have caused the profoundest agitation and the deepest distress; it is the oldest and most hackneyed of them which have gained credit and currency as new and important discoveries. Our fathers knew better; they read these things in their common

theological manuals, and were aware that, be their weight what it might, they had long ago been at all events appraised and allowed for in received theories. We do wrong in these times to assume that an elementary Christian teaching will have been given at home or at school. We do wrong if we forget that the spiritual as well as the moral nature requires watchfulness from the tutor, and needs to be informed with right principles and guided to right conclusions. The penalties of omitting or slighting so vital a portion of a perfect training are speedy and severe. The noblest incentives to energy and self-discipline are wanting. The fortress of the heart is not garrisoned by strong principle against the assault of temptations. The rain descends and the winds blow, and beat against the house, and it falleth; for it is not founded on the rock. Nor less is the miscarriage as regards opinion. Those of whom we are in charge must surely not be launched on life at hazard. If we supply no ballast and no rudder, no chart and no compass, the voyage can hardly be prosperous or direct, even if peradventure it gain the haven at last. Our younger brethren are unsettled and uneasy in their minds on religious matters. They have not a due esteem for the sacred office. It will never be otherwise, brethren, so long as plain, substantial, and systematic theological instruction does not form an essential and recognised part of their academical course. And such instruction,—lectures on the Evidences, the Prayer-book, the Epistles,—it needs not to say before such an audience, may be rendered both attractive and eminently practical.

But scruples, we are told, about the Bible or the Prayer-book, afflict the best-informed, the highest-minded, the most blameless. Scruples, we are told, there are which

deter from Holy Orders, requiring, as Orders do, stringent allegiance to formularies of some bulk and complexity. God forbid that such scruples should not be respectfully treated! But let them notwithstanding be put in their proper place, and regarded in their proper character. A scruple in itself is no sign of moral health; it is not in itself and for itself a thing to be fostered. If the callous conscience is wicked, the casuistical conscience is weak. A perpetual worry of self-examination on small details forbids alike comprehensive views and energetic action. A scruple may be right and reasonable, and yet it may be right and reasonable to set it aside. It must not be so brought into the forefront as to shut out every other consideration. There are those whose taste and turn marks them out for the Church's service; there are men who are, as it were, nature's priests; their providential path in life, their destination by friends, their very habitudes of body, all point the same way. They so thoroughly prefer the Church's worship that they would never dream of forsaking it for another; they heartily assent to the Church's general teaching; they could be well content to work her system, as in practice it has to be worked, in her parishes. On the other hand, there is a difficulty on the mind here and there; there is a scruple about this or that declaration. Might we not with reason remonstrate with those who turn away from the work appointed them on such grounds? Is *everything* to be sacrificed to the scruple, —the whole to be sacrificed to keep the part, that we say not the excrescence? The terms of subscription are simple matters of legislation, by no means of the essence of the Church's system at all. It is one thing to seek for alterations of the Prayer-book or Articles; it is quite another thing to advocate a different formula of sub-

scription to them. Revision of the Prayer-book can hardly take place without raising questions of doctrine which would probably rend the Church in pieces; but the declarations of assent and consent may be modified on plain grounds of expediency by the enactment of the civil power, leaving untouched the Church's ancient body of doctrine and devotion. The signs of the times point not obscurely to this last step as one to be expected¹. Until it is taken, surely we may be well content to grant to the legal securities which protect the threshold of ordination and admission to a benefice, that same equity of construction which we apply to the Rubrics and Canons. Ancient regulations cannot be applied to very different times and circumstances without such allowance. Your venerable statutes have often to be regarded in the spirit rather than the letter; nay, to be broken in the letter that the spirit may be kept. The Church's machinery for self-adaptation, too, has long been in abeyance. In the oversensitive state of men's minds, this cannot be regarded as an unmixed evil. Our ecclesiastical institutions have not indeed been revised and modified to meet emergent occasions; they sit ill, in some respects, on the Church's present work and the Church's present wants. Yet this very inconcinnity shews that we must, till we can adapt our system to its present duties, be content to ease it when it meets a state of things not contemplated by its framers. The Church has, has always had, large-hearted prelates who will treat such questions with fatherly considerateness; who will readily explain what the practical meaning and substantial effect of our tests is. The *animus imponentis* is the master-key in interpreting such tests; and it has been said

¹ See Appendix K.

with reason that "the very loss of the Church's machinery for change justifies us in seeking that *animus* rather in the present than the past^m."

Scruples of the kind referred to rarely stand the brunt of life's work and life's experience. Venture forth from the sheltered precincts of the University, enter on the practical duties of the sacred calling, little then will speculative doubts harass you, little will Church anomalies and abuses interfere with your daily ministrations. And is not this a token that the doubts and scruples which would deter from such work are exaggerated, are unworthy to bear sway over the life? Religion after all is, first and above all things, an affair of practice. In no one other thing should theory be more severely, more totally postponed. "The knowledge that will hold good in working," says one of our great writers, "cleave thou to that, for nature herself accredits and says yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working. The rest is all yet a hypothesis of knowledge, a thing to be argued of in schools, till we try it and fix it. Doubt of whatever kind can only be ended by actionⁿ."

We have been plainly told, in various shapes and ways, that the Church is now on her trial whether she can and will take spiritual charge of the masses of the people or not. Nobly has she of late years applied herself to the task. There is now no disaffection to her amongst the tens of thousands of our operatives. They want in truth little but encouragement and opportunity to enlist themselves under her banner in the mass. She has victory as it were within her grasp, but her own failing veins minister not the vital force which can

^m Dr. C. J. Vaughan's Sermons on Revision of Liturgy—Preface.

ⁿ Carlyle's Past and Present, book iii. ch. xi.

achieve it. Soon indeed must she relax her hold, and lose her hardy-earned advantage, unless through your zeal and your prayers she be strongly and swiftly recruited. Never surely had the clergyman greater or more certain prospects of usefulness and success. The pulpit is once again beginning to assert its old sway in the affairs of men; for jaded and languid with the variety and multitude of things pressed on their attention through the eye, they seek again, as of old, to the living voice. They will indeed scan him closely who asks for their confidence, but they will also lean on him the more unreservedly if he prove true-hearted and competent. The life of the minister of God must—we do not disguise it—be drawn within straiter lines than that of other men. But these self-same restrictions are safeguards against mighty temptations; and to the dutiful soul they are ere long transfigured into sacraments of blessing, winning it upward with a sweet constraint to an unselfish and unblemished walk. The Church imposes her conditions on those who take her commission, and must do so, for without fixed doctrines the purposes of a religious society could not be carried on; we should know neither what to teach nor what to exhort. Doubtless, too, views may change, and changed views may fret and chafe at the Church's circumscriptions. For, indeed, opinion amongst us is not only quick in its vicissitudes, but revenges itself for its fleetness by a certain unprecedented intensity and impatience of control whilst it lasts. But then the very existence of authoritative definitions tends to preserve a modest and reasonable mind from rashness and vehemence of opinion, and to keep its swing within safe limits on this side and on that. Anyhow, to decline a vocation to which aptitude and

circumstance point, because opinions may hereafter change, is to shun a future risk by incurring a present loss. The danger may be chimerical, but he who addicts himself in self-will to uncongenial employment, curses his own life with continual disrelish and miscarriage. It is sacrilege, truly, to thrust oneself into the sacred office without a call from God; but it is rebellion to reject the ambassage of God when He bids undertake it. There was sin in Balaam, who would fain have prophesied for reward; there was sin likewise in him who arose and fled to Tarshish from God's presence and God's errand. Our Church is, in short, oppressed with a mighty task which she must fulfil, or, as a national institution, perish. She asks in her extremity help of you: not your money, nor your learning, nor your privileges, though these in their time and place be well; but now above all yourselves; "not yours, but you." There have never been wanting to these venerable walls those to whom it is first and dearest to follow their Saviour; will they not choose first of all, and above all, and beyond all, that walk of life wherein they may tread in His blessed footsteps most closely, far more closely than otherwise can be, and dedicate themselves to the very end for which He was born, and the self-same work for which He lived?

APPENDIX.

A.

THE following table, which, with the exception of the last three columns, is taken from a sermon on "Clerical Destitution," by the Rev. R. Gregory, Incumbent of St. Mary's, Lambeth, shews the number of ordinations in England and Wales for several years past. Under the head of *Literate* are ranged all persons qualified for ordination through other means than graduation at the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, or Dublin. The large majority of these were supplied by the various Theological Colleges.

	1841	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862
Oxford . .	242	211	215	199	211	203	169	171	195	179	181	162	159	120
Cambridge	270	252	222	234	231	187	225	215	208	222	257	227	219	178
Durham . .	13	21	23	27	21	27	29	30	22	32	25	16	21	13
Dublin . .	33	50	41	38	41	30	40	40	51	29	29	29	30	32
Literate . .	48	88	113	104	128	77	99	120	130	133	123	133	141	146
Total . .	606	622	614	602	632	524	562	576	606	595	615	567	570	489

The last three columns are compiled, as indeed were those given by Mr. Gregory, from the returns given in the "Ecclesiastical Gazette," and other newspapers. The Bishop of Winchester in his last Charge, October, 1862, p. 23, comments thus on these returns:—"In this table two things are observable; first, that not only have the candidates for ordination not increased in proportion to the population, but that they are actually fewer in number than they were twenty years ago, and that the decrease is in an increasing ratio; and secondly, that while from Oxford and Cambridge fewer present themselves, and notably from the former University, and from both with a regular progressive decrease, the non-graduates are greatly in the ascendancy, and have multiplied threefold. The decrease in candidates from Oxford in the twenty years is $34\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.; the decrease from

Cambridge 19 per cent., while the increase in Literates is no fewer than $193\frac{1}{4}$ per cent." The returns for 1862, which the Bishop of course had not then before him, point these remarks still more forcibly.

It may be noted that there is an error in the figures as stated by the Bishop. He gives the Literates in 1861 as 241, instead of 141, which is the true number. Since the total of the ordinations for the year is correctly given as 570, it would seem that there is simply a misprint. Bishop Colenso [(on the Pentateuch, Part II., Preface, p. xi.) has characteristically assumed, without remark, that there is an error in Bishop Sumner's adding up, and altered the total to 670. Having thus by guess-work obtained a false basis, Bishop Colenso proceeds to reason on it as to the education of the clergy, and the opinions prevalent amongst them about inspiration. He is followed both in his blunders and his arguments by the reviewer of his book in the "Athenæum" of Feb. 7, 1863.

B.

THE numbers of the clergy do not appear to shew any considerable increase on the whole. In "Parker's Church Calendar" for 1863, the benefices of England and Wales are returned as in number 12,023, curates as 4,930. In the "Clerical Guide" for 1829 (Rivingtons,) the benefices are 10,719, the curates 5,232. The totals will be 15,951 for 1829, and 16,953 for 1863. In the meantime the population had increased from 13,896,797 in 1831, to 20,209,671 in 1861. No doubt, in estimating the numbers of the clergy some little allowance must be made for pluralities and for non-residence, which were much more common in 1829 than they now are. The diminution in the number of curates since 1829 is remarkable.

C.

"DID any one present happen to know how many men our bishops would require to supply the 'wear and tear' among our clergy, supposing that in England there were 18,000 clergy? It had been calculated, and the result he

doubted not was pretty nearly accurate, that it would require 600 new ordinations every year—that is to say, 1,200 priests and deacons.”—*Report of the Church Congress of 1861*, p. 121, (*speech of Dr. Hume.*) It will be seen from the table given above that we have not now nearly 600 new ordinations annually; and of those ordained some go out to the colonies; e.g. in the returns for 1862 there is included an ordination held on July 27, by the Bishop of Sierra Leone, under a commission from the Bishop of London, at which fourteen gentlemen were ordained exclusively for foreign Missions.

D.

THERE are four such Societies known to me; viz.,—

(1.) *The Clerical Education Aid Fund.* Secretary, Rev. T. R. Redwar, 6 Powis-place, Great Ormond-street, London, W.C. This Society was instituted in 1845, disposes of an income of from £400 to £500 a-year, and has six students at the Universities wholly or partly maintained by it. The number ordained in connection with it has been fifty-one.

(2.) *The London Clerical Education Society.* Secretary, Rev. E. Auriol, 35, Mecklenburgh-square, London, W.C.

(3.) *The Bristol Clerical Education Society.* Secretary, Rev. W. Knight, St. Michael's, Bristol.

(4.) *The Elland Society.* Secretary, Rev. J. Bardsley, St. Ann's, Manchester.

There are likewise exhibitions in connection with many of the clergy charities, available for these purposes, though only open to the near relatives of clergymen; and there are the Rev. J. Cleathing's Exhibitions of £50 annually in connection with the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy. A complete account of such resources for aiding clerical education is a desideratum. Those of them which possess endowments might, perhaps, with advantage admit of re-organization through the Charity Commissioners.

E.

SEE “Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the Deficiency of Means

of Spiritual Instruction and Places of Divine Worship in the Metropolis and other Populous Districts of England and Wales, &c. &c. July, 1858.”

“ Before quitting the metropolis generally, it is right to state that, according to a return of the Bishop of London’s secretary, the churches in that diocese having a population of more than 5,000 are 163, being one church on the average for 11,000 of the whole population, 1,768,656; the number of clergymen is 373, one on the average to 4,800. Bearing in mind that 2,000 are as many as can be tolerably well visited by a single clergyman, it appears that the number ought to be at least 900; that there is, therefore, a want of not fewer than 527 more parochial clergymen in that portion of the metropolis which is within the diocese of London. But adding to it those portions which are in the counties of Surrey and Kent, the deficiency can hardly be estimated at less than 600.”—(p. vii.) Quoted in Archdeacon Sandford’s “ Bampton Lectures,” p. 245. Thus it appears that *the diocese of London alone* requires more than the whole of the clergy who yearly receive ordination. The manufacturing and mining districts are naturally much worse provided with clergy than the diocese which includes the metropolis.

F.

It might be suggested, e.g. that our Home Missionary Societies should under present circumstances cease to employ lay agents. The Church Pastoral Aid Society, e.g. pays £80 or £90 a-year to about 170 Scripture-readers, or makes grants to complete a stipend of that amount. There are also numerous local Societies which raise money for the maintenance of Scripture-readers in populous parishes. I have been informed that not less than fifty of these assistants are maintained by local subscriptions in Liverpool and the immediate neighbourhood alone. No one who knows our large towns will question the value of their labours, yet an increased supply of clergy is so absolutely essential that it might be well to limit our home missionary efforts for the

present to securing that object. If the Societies would increase, say to £140 or £150, the annual stipends of those curates who should continue longer than two years in the curacies to which they were ordained, the result could hardly fail to be satisfactory. At present it is seldom indeed that young men ordained to serve in populous and laborious districts will remain after the expiration of the two years which the bishop prescribes. They naturally seek employment in country parishes which offer greater social advantages and make less exhausting demands on their strength and their pocket. Might we not also obtain from our laity generally many of the services now rendered by Scripture-readers? There are many surely who would, without surrender of their trade or profession, give a portion of their time to district visiting, &c., if encouraged to do so by some sort of regular recognition and commission from the authorities of the Church. Every one knows how largely this kind of agency is employed by dissenters. I cannot see that the "extension of the diaconate" is practicable. If men hang back from Holy Orders when all such advantages as the profession affords are open to them, are they likely to seek ordination when clogged with the condition of a lengthened or permanent diaconate? The deacon, whilst he remains such, is disqualified at once for all other professions, and for independent position in his own.

The sale of the Lord Chancellor's patronage has been often suggested. It is estimated by the Rev. J. D. Massingham, Incumbent of St. Paul's, Derby, in a letter to the "Times" dated December 22, 1862, that at least *a million and a half of money* might be thus obtained for Church purposes. A re-valuation of the benefices to Queen Anne's Bounty for tenths and first-fruits has been also often suggested, e.g., by Mr. Massingham, *ibid.*, and by Archdeacon Sandford, "Bampton Lectures" for 1861, p. 103, and is a plain measure of justice. Large funds, estimated at more than £300,000 a-year, would be thus obtained for the augmentation of poor livings and the endowment of new ones. These sums granted, on the principle now so well understood, in aid of local efforts, would go a long way to remedy

“spiritual destitution” in our populous districts. The fertility of this principle has scarcely yet been thoroughly appreciated. A striking example of its success is furnished by an Association “formed in Southwark for raising a fund to augment the poorly endowed benefices in that deanery to a minimum of £200 per annum.” (Bishop of Winchester’s Charge, October, 1862, p. 32.) The Association commenced operations in 1860; and owed its existence, I believe, very much to the exertions of the Rev. R. Gregory, Incumbent of St. Mary’s, Lambeth. The deanery contains near seventy churches, many of which were miserably endowed; several of them having less than £100 a-year. Yet the Bishop anticipates that “in little more than another year the whole object for which the fund was raised will have been attained.” The truth is that with the aid of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and of Queen Anne’s Bounty a very moderate sum raised on the spot may become the means of securing a really considerable endowment for a new district church. These facts point at once to the expediency of enlarging the funds of Queen Anne’s Bounty, as above suggested, and of appealing to the country for help to comply with the conditions on which grants can be made from such funds. The country would certainly answer to a stirring and general appeal from our ecclesiastical rulers. It is encouraging to take note that the “Free Kirk” raises in Scotland about £300,000 a-year by voluntary contributions towards the maintenance of its ministers.

G.

THE necessary cost of carrying on a theological college with efficiency cannot be estimated at much less than £700 a-year. Instruction must be given in Hebrew, in the Greek Testament, in Latin, in the Evidences, in Church History, in Biblical and Ecclesiastical Antiquities, in the Articles of Religion, in the Liturgy, in Pastoral Theology, in the Composition of Sermons, in the Delivery of Sermons and Reading the Liturgy, and in Church Law. Some portions of the writings of the Fathers in the original ought also to form

part of the course; and there ought to be preparatory instruction for those not yet qualified to begin the two years' course. One man can never efficiently lecture on subjects so many and so various. Stipends ought, therefore, to be provided for a Principal and Vice-Principal at least which would amount to £550 or £600 per annum. Then provision must also be made for libraries, lecture-rooms, taxes and rates, and in some cases for rent, incidental expenses, &c. The usual fees at the theological colleges are £30 a-year. In the Theological Department of Queen's College, Birmingham, the fees amount to £21, which, in the case of resident students, is reduced to £15 15s., the instruction there given being paid for in part by endowments. That these fees cannot be raised is clear from the fact that many of the theological colleges are nearly empty. It appears, then, that a diocesan college cannot possibly pay its way. Graduates will usually avail themselves of the theological arrangements of their own University; and of non-graduates some will be supplied to the diocese through King's College, London, and other such non-diocesan institutions, and eight or ten is the largest number who will, even in the larger dioceses, be seeking ordination through the diocesan college at any one time,—i.e., the resources of such a college will not average £300 a-year at the most. The truth is that many of the able and learned tutors in the theological colleges are paid little or nothing for their labours. Such a state of things is creditable to their zeal, but cannot be regarded as right, or as likely on the whole to work well. No system can be satisfactory or permanent which does not pay its expenses, and offer a fair remuneration to those who work it.

In addition to the college at Wells, which belongs to a class not now under consideration, there are no less than *ten* theological colleges in existence in various parts of the kingdom, and several of them have been recently founded. It is plain that so many colleges cannot *all* have an efficient apparatus, a good staff of tutors, and an adequate number of pupils; to say nothing of those which, if matters go on as at present, will be founded hereafter. It is plainly a waste of

resources to be maintaining so many tutors to do the work which half the number could do as well; and such a number of small and necessarily imperfect colleges to educate a number of men which would not do more than fill four or five larger and more complete ones.

H.

THE Diocesan Colleges cannot be regarded as permanent institutions. It is apparent that some of them must ere long be abandoned, and their failure will affect the credit of the others, so far at least as the prospect of obtaining endowments is concerned. The fault of such failure does not belong to the officers of the colleges, but to the system.

Many incumbents have a strong dislike of diocesan colleges, and will not engage curates from them. Whether this dislike is reasonable or not, it is equally prejudicial to the colleges. A college on a less narrow basis, affiliated to the Universities, would not have to contend with the same prejudices.

It is scarcely too much to say that it is *impossible* for a college founded on the diocesan principle to attain durable success. No doubt under a Principal of commanding ability, or with the active support of a very influential prelate, some measure of success may be obtained by a college on *any* principle. But an institution which will answer only under extraordinary circumstances is not founded on a trustworthy basis.

In truth the wants of the Church would be amply satisfied by four or five colleges in different quarters of the kingdom. Two of them might perhaps be with advantage placed in large towns, the others in cathedral cities or in country situations. Some students need above all things opportunity for study and retirement; others require facilities for gaining an experimental knowledge of Church work in populous districts, and would be none the worse for the stimulus of a town life. The students of the town colleges ought to be resident within the walls, except when their homes are in the town or neighbourhood.

It is noteworthy that the Cathedral Commissioners in their Third and final Report (1855) recommend that "in each of the two provinces a certain number of theological seminaries should be formed or restored." In support of their recommendation they "suggest that where a cathedral is so situate that in connexion with it a theological college could be instituted, which should be under the direction of the Bishops and Chapters of *several associated dioceses*, the benefits of such institutions might best be secured, and the dangers apprehended from a too great multiplication of such colleges be avoided."—(p. xix.)

We have certainly reached the presence of those dangers. Since the date of this Report three more diocesan colleges have been founded.

As to the principle of keeping the training of the diocesan clergy under the direction of the diocesan, I would observe that even if abstractedly the right one, it is to us impracticable. None but the largest dioceses can support a college of their own, and yet it is just those dioceses which we hope to see divided.

I.

I HAVE been told since the delivery of the Sermon that the theological instruction given in the colleges of Oxford is at least as ample and as good as it ever was of late years. I should be glad to think that this is so. A very different impression has certainly prevailed for some time past in the country. But I venture to think that the theological element in the College lecture-list might at any time this last twenty years have occupied with advantage a more prominent place than it has done. Anyhow, courses of lectures on the divinity subjects prescribed in the Examination Statutes ought surely to be a regular part of the educational arrangements of every college.

J.

THE point I wish to insist on is, that large and increasing numbers of non-University men are annually ordained, and yet the Church is in urgent and ever more urgent want of

clergy. This want can only be met by a course of preparation for ordination which shall be short, cheap, and as efficient as it can be made. To cut down the course in Arts to two years, and to superadd a third year of theological study, would not meet the case, for it would not appreciably shorten or cheapen the access to Orders. I doubt whether the Universities would gain a single pupil by such a measure.

At a meeting of the representatives of the Theological Colleges, held in June 1862, reported in the "Guardian" of July 9, and referred to at some length by Bishop (then Dean) Ellicott, at the Oxford Congress (see Report, p. 10), steps have already been taken to act in unison, to apply for a charter empowering some central body of examiners to confer degrees in theology, and, in short, to form a sort of theological university. Those concerned in that movement, of whom I was one, acted, I believe, under the impression that there is no hope of the Universities taking the matter up; and under a pressing sense of the absolute necessity of bringing the present institutions for training Literates into some kind of co-operation. They would, I think, greatly prefer some such plan as that at which I have ventured to hint in the Sermon.

In short, there are many who cannot graduate, but desire to serve the Church as ministers, and the Church cannot dispense with their services. It is for the Universities to determine whether the theological education of these men shall be conducted with the safeguards, the credit, and the efficiency which it is largely in the power of the Universities to bestow; or whether they will be content to see themselves robbed of no small share of that dignity, influence, and connexion which hitherto they have enjoyed as the *Almæ Matres* of the pastors of the national Church. The Church now urgently needs the active aid and direct interposition of the Universities. The time has been when the Universities have needed the support of the Church, and may be again. An alliance so ancient and so beneficial to both parties cannot be seriously weakened, much less dissolved, with good omen to either.

The following passage in an article on clerical education in "The Christian Advocate," of November, 1862, an able

periodical belonging to the Evangelical school of our Church, illustrates aptly enough the direction in which men's minds are setting, and the fact that Churchmen of all colours are beginning perforce and reluctantly to entertain the idea of a sundering between the old Universities and the preparation for Holy Orders:—"And thus much may, we think, be assuredly gathered from the tendency of public opinion—that, if the Universities do not at once take up the subject, they must be prepared to see the special training of the clergy pass from them; and, once gone, it is not likely to return. Some may think this for the better, and some for the worse; we simply state the fact. At present the old Universities retain their privilege—a B.A. degree is the ordinary passport to Holy Orders. How long they may do so, should the real education of the clergy be transferred to other quarters, is problematical. Bishops may, under such circumstances, be tempted to think a University degree superfluous. However the question may be determined, it is one well worthy of the attention of the distinguished persons who preside over the destinies of these venerable institutions."

K.

I WOULD beg to say, in explanation of my remarks upon the formulæ of subscription, that *personally* I desire no changes in the matter. But if, as there is reason to believe, the consciences of many scrupulous and thoughtful young men, thoroughly attached to the Church, find difficulties in adopting these formulæ, and if such men in consequence refuse to bear office in the Church, that surely is a reason for re-considering the whole subject. After all, the tests are for the sake of the Church, not the Church for them. The knowledge of a young man is necessarily imperfect; his opportunities of studying the intricate questions supposed to be involved in the Articles and Creeds can have been but limited; his opinions must be regarded as to a certain extent provisional. Under such circumstances it seems only reasonable to admit, as a very able prelate has recently said, "that

the form of words in which that assent is required to be given may be justly open to objection. The times in which we live are happily different from those in which it was framed; and if we had to compose the form anew we might find words sufficient for the purpose yet less exacting than the expression of 'unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer.'" (Bishop of Worcester's Charge, August, 1862, p. 50.) Would not a declaration of acceptance of the doctrines of the Church as contained in the Articles, and a promise of conformity to the Liturgy, give all the requisite securities? It might surely be presumed that a clergyman will not undertake to use in the worship of God forms which his conscience does not approve. If changes are to take place at all, it seems far safer and easier to modify the terms of subscription than to meddle with the Prayer-book or Articles. Happily the opinion of the Church has been so strongly pronounced against the latter course that the former only seems practically open to us. Let it be noted too, that alterations of the Prayer-book would necessarily involve us in the duty of the strictest and most literal observance of the Book as altered.

